

Story of the Omaha Press Club and Its Present Prosperity



CLARENCE THE COP AND HAPPY HOOLIGAN.



FIVE OF THE COOKS WHO SAVED THE BROTH.



GIRLS IN RED WHO CAME IN BLOCKS OF FIVE.



SEVEN LITTLE TEDDY GIRLS ALL IN A ROW.



TOODLES AND THE TOM CAT.

ANY will argue that newspaper men are constitutionally pessimistic and inherently inclined to the sour view. But these do not quite understand. It is really the extreme optimism of the newspaper workers that sometimes twists his mouth toward the wide, is what does it. Therefore did he not expect so much he would not be disappointed so often. After a long period of these shocks he adjusts himself, usually, in the guise of an individual of immense impassiveness with eyes that see when they look, and with the ability to make quick and true deductions. Some, it is true, as they become aged grow to prefer the society of their own meditations and books to that of their fellows, but they have no other reason than the long hours, the hard work and the constant buffeting of the newspaper tollers.

So much for his attitude toward the public. With his own kind he does not cherish half the rivalry and the anxiety to "beat the other fellow to it," that misconception publishes. Triumphs in his work are so much a matter of propriety and luck that ferocity toward men on the other papers does not pay. Oftentimes by working together only on the news or the advertising, or whatever it may be, he gets the fellowship exists that is bound to come with knowing something about the other's parallel vicissitudes. As proof of this observe the press clubs that flourish in nearly every city of the United States where the craft is numerous enough to make a decent membership roll.

Omaha's Latest Press Club.
Omaha has its press club—has had it regularly for more than three years, and it is in a prosperous condition, too. Finances have been the least of its troubles. How to work away from his troubles and needed recreation during some of the brief hours that are not spent in earning his salary has been the cardinal problem. But by simply existing and doing a few things now and then, the club is finally arranging things so that it will fit in neatly with every member's workday life and he won't have to make a special effort to make himself believe that he is doing his full duty. Improvements are planned that will put the organization and its trappings and facilities on a par with any except the very biggest press clubs in the country. In short the leading spirits declare it is to become a veritable institution that every Omahan will swear by and the brains, beauty, wit, genius and skill that visit the city will remember with a smile.

So long ago that its memory is veiled in a haze almost mystical there was an Omaha Press club. The gay times it had, the jokes it cracked and the good feeling it manufactured are eminently things of the past and should not be dug up. It is not on record that any attempt has been made to dig them up and spread them for the edification of these generations. Like good men who have passed away their bones, per force, will rest in peace.

Burst of a New Bloom.
But in the present era a new club was formed—one with large chunks of ginger in it and a remarkable capacity for leaving certain legacies to its successor—the present organization. Of which it is spoken was born October 2, 1902, and drew breath valiantly until and including the 31 day of November in the same year. On this memorable date a theatrical performance was given at the Boyd, by the members of "The Burgomaster" company. Graphein show and whatever was in blossom at Mitaco's old Trocadero. It was a glittering, howling success. Much money was coined for the Press club. After the mint closed there were two baskets—due for the Thompsons who so kindly milled the dollars, the theatrical people, the ushers, orchestra and all hands. The other was a strictly club affair. In the aftermath there were the payment of expenses and exit club—until the reorganization in 1905.

Of the lamented body Smith E. Hall, then managing editor of the News and now departed from our midst, was president; Will M. Maupin, now a faeter on Bryan's Commoner, was vice president; E. B. Smith, then city editor of The Bee and now to this vicinity minus, was chairman of the executive committee. Will B. Welshans, one of the brightest of Omaha's "native" newspaper men and who died in California, was secretary. J. W. McCann-

man, later city editor of The Bee and managing editor of the Kansas City World, was a leading light. But despite the talent the club drooped for reasons which no one has diagnosed.

To one, Frank Wickizer, belongs much of the credit for blowing life into the dead thing. Mr. Wickizer is now happily engaged writing politics and raising fancy chickens in St. Joseph, where, also, another press club has been reared as a monument to his talents for organization. Happily, no poultry breeding occupied his idle moments while he was a member of The Bee's staff. Therefore one March day in 1902 every person connected on, in, with or to an Omaha publication received in his mail a joyful poetic burst, the verses being sandwiched with announcements that the Press club was to be again and that cigars would be presented to all who assisted. Thus broke the clarion call:

Hear, ye! pushers of the Faber,
Get a move on Tuesday next!
But when finished is your labor,
Please remember the old text:
"Too much work, too small leisure,
Fillet Jack with studiousness."
Let us then be in for pleasure
When the paper's gone to press.

Still impressed with the educational value that might come from such a condition, Wickizer whipped up his muse and moved onward:

That our thinktanks may be brightened,
And our sluggish blood be warned;
That our burdens may be lightened,
Then relax your nerves a minute,
Let there be surcease of stress,
And you'll find there's comfort in it,
When the paper's gone to press.

It will be noted that the poet is careful not to suggest the sending of any of the time that rightly belongs to the employer in the joys of the club, but waits until the labor of the day is done. The morality in his soul reaches its zenith, however, in the concluding appeal:

Who knows? perhaps some day hereafter,
When our forms have all "gone down,"
And we're "called upon the carpet,"
By the "chief" who wears a crown,
If there's been some little glowing
Of usefulness, kindness,
We may make a better showing
When OUR paper's gone to press.

Formation of the Real Thing.
It matters not whether it was the cigars or the verse that did the work. Sufficient is it to record that somewhat like two score reporters, advertising men and editors assembled in the Commercial club rooms at 439 on the afternoon of March 4. All that was said is not on record, but each present flipped a coin on the table and enrolled his name. Later L. A. Medlar, publisher of the Hotel Reporter, was elected president; George H. Carter, city editor of the Council Bluffs Nonpareil, vice president; Frank Wickizer of The Bee, secretary, and W. H. Wilbur of the World-Herald, treasurer. The first directors, who served with the officers as the executive committee, were O. E. McCune, now business manager of the News; Edgar S. Bradley, then an editor on the World-Herald and now printing his own commercial weekly, and J. D. Weaver of The Bee's advertising staff.

After organization came the question of quarters and fitting them. A limited amount of cash had been inherited from the Omaha Press club—the name of the new organization was the Tri-City Press Club, and it included South Omaha and Council

Bluffs—and committees were appointed to see about the business. Within a few weeks comfortable but small rooms were furnished in the Patterson block at Seventeenth and Farnam streets and they immediately became well frequented. Local merchants discounted heavily on furniture sold the club; some of them made handsome contributions; local artists gave a number of pictures in oil; Manager Lane of the Nebraska Telephone company installed a telephone; Schmoeffer & Mueller a piano, and in a short time few things were lacking to make the quarters very attractive.

Here was hatched a scheme to bring the convention of the National Editorial association to Omaha for 1903. No time was lost and when a large party of northwestern newspaper men passed through the city on April 10 on its way to the convention, which was held in Hot Springs, Ark., that year, a delegation from the Press club, composed of L. A. Medlar, E. S. Bradley, G. H. Gillespie, O. E. McCune and Frank Wickizer, met the excursionists at Columbus. Large bunches of cut flowers were

taken for the women and unlimited cigars, and when the train reached Omaha the cars had a festive appearance. Literature, badges and persuasion were urged upon the delegates. E. O. Mayfield and J. M. Tanner went on to Hot Springs and did such effective work that it was practically decided to have the next convention in Omaha.

Coming Into Its Own.
The club was growing all the time and in the fall it was agreed that larger quarters must be obtained. Rooms were secured

Entertaining Little Stories for Little People

His Mistress' Voice.
SPOT sat down, looking as puzzled as ever a doggie could look. "I don't understand it," he said; "I can't make it out in the least."
"What is wrong now?" asked his friend Scotty, a pretty little terrier with long fur-like hair. He was curled up in front of the fire.
"Why, I've been in the study with master," answered Spot, "and I heard Missus talking quite plainly, and I couldn't find her any more."
"How funny!" and Scotty jumped up from the soft rug. "Take me in to see, will you? Perhaps I can find her out."
Spot shook his head dolefully; he was too bewildered to say, as he would have done at another time, "If I can't find her I'm sure you can't," but he led the way into the hall and scratched at the study door.

Elks and Elk Horns.
How many persons, among the many thousands that annually visit our zoological parks, realize, as they pause to admire the noble bucks of the deer family—particularly the wapiti, or American elk—that their branching antlers are cast off annually and renewed and well hardened within the short period of seven months?

Before describing the manner in which elk shed their antlers, I should like to explain the difference between "antlers" and "horns." All the members of the deer family—the moose, caribou, elk (in Europe the animal which we call moose is known as elk), and smaller deer—possess antlers, while the appendages on the heads of goats, sheep, cattle and the like are known as horns, and with one exception—the American antelope, or prong-horn—are retained by their owners throughout life.

Elk shed their antlers about February 1, though much depends upon the locality and upon the age and health of the animal. It often happens that one antler is carried several days after the other has been dropped. The new antlers push off the old ones, and when they appear they resemble scars on the animal's forehead, but soon take the form of two black velvet buttons about the size of silver dollars. As they continue to grow they gain in length only, and by July 1 they have attained their full size. If you could examine them now, you would find them soft, rather flexible, nourished by blood and incased in a thick, tough skin covered with velvet fur. The antlers are now "in the velvet," as the hunters term it, a most critical period for the owner, who seems to realize it, for he is careful to avoid contact with anything liable to injure them. Should an accident happen and the skin get broken or the antler disfigured, it might result in the elk's bleeding to death or in his carrying a deformed antler until the following February. Through a

process of nature the blood vessels that stand any abuse or bad treatment, but sometimes they show that they have split enough. Of course, there are bad donkeys, who will kick and behave wickedly at any time, like some boys and girls, so that it is a surprise to see them behave well.

But the donkey I am going to tell you about was nearly always quiet. He was very brave also as you will see. He lived in a menagerie in one of our western cities. There were a great many savage beasts in this menagerie, and one day a fierce lioness broke out of her cage. She ran around to see whom she could bite, and she met this donkey, who was allowed to go loose because he would not hurt anything. She made a jump at him and took hold of him with her teeth; but the donkey was so quick and spirited that he got away from her. Then the lioness made another great spring upon, but this time Mr. Donkey was ready for her.

He turned his back to her, and when she came near him, he gave her a great kick with both his hind feet at once and rolled her over like a ball. She came at him again, and again, but every time his strong heels were ready for her, and every time the brave donkey kicked her over on her back. At last she had enough of Mr. Donkey's kicks, and she ran away from him. She did not know before how well a brave donkey could fight.

You have often heard about lions, which are so strong and courageous that they are called the kings of beasts, and perhaps you have seen more of them shut up in a cage when you have been taken to a wild beast show. But it is likely that you thought that one of these great creatures could ever be conquered by a small donkey, who had nothing to fight with but his heels. —Minneapolis Tribune.



FICKLE WILLIE AND THE BUNCH HE CHOSE FROM.

on the second floor of the Ramage block and on October 12 the goods and chattels of the organization were moved in. The glory of the new home and the cooler weather incited social functions which continued throughout the winter with uniform success. Various kinds of smokers, card parties, musicians and socials were given, always with a program to which the best musicians, singers and amateur actors of the city contributed. Women attended on certain evenings and enjoyed the Bohemian character of the entertainments as much, if not more, than the men. Every now and then a well known man, a writer, a bon vivant or an unusual personality would drop in unexpectedly and enliven the already lively doings, for it seemed that the gala nights of the club were well known.

During the year the original promoter of the club, Wickizer, went to St. Joseph to take a staff position on a new paper there. His departure was signaled by a quiet dinner at the Millard at which most of the club members sat down. L. O. Simons, publisher of the Westliche Presse, and one of the most earnest workers and best membership hustlers of the club, was elected secretary to fill the vacancy.

In the winter the club backed a successful exhibition and sale of newspaper artists' work in the club rooms. It being the first of its kind ever given here.

One of Its "Benefits."
With the co-operation of the Commercial club the National Editorial association's convention was eventually definitely secured for July 8, 9 and 10, 1903. The matter was clinched by a trip to St. Louis where the executive committee meeting was being held, by President Medlar, M. G. Perkins and John Utt, then secretary of the Commercial club. To amass funds to care for the convention and to replenish the club treasury as well, an entertainment was given at the Boyd theater on the afternoon of February 9, 1903. Both the Orpheum and Boyd management and everyone connected with the houses from box office men, orchestra to stage hands contributed everything they could to the show's success. "The Shore Acres" company, playing at the Boyd, gave a full act, a number of Orpheum artists assisted materially and Manager Carl Reiter and other talent bearing an Omaha address did commendable stunts. Practically every dollar taken in was turned into the club treasury as everyone contributed his services and Manager Burgess simply handed over his playhouse for the afternoon.

Some Who Have Moved.
Newspaper men as a class are too impatient for advancement and fame to stay long in one place if better things are offered in another and the membership of the Press club, which more than a year ago resumed its old name—the Omaha Press club—is constantly changing, the percentage of stable members being about two-thirds. Considering the charter membership list at the reorganization it is interesting to note the number that have left Omaha in the last three years. Beginning alphabetically, John A. Ball, formerly of The Bee staff, has become assistant advertising manager for the Burlington, George H. Carter, city editor of the Council Bluffs Nonpareil, has gone to a better job in Des Moines; L. P. Covington, formerly with the News and noted for a peculiarly dry wit, is in the harness in St. Paul; George M. Davis, who worked for the News and World-Herald, is the chief police reporter on the Toledo Blade; J. H. Furry, from a subordinate desk on the News has become night editor of the Indianapolis Morning Star; "Jimmie" Houston, Jr., treasurer of the News, has gone to Des Moines; E. O. Mayfield, the "Hex M" man on the World-Herald, has become manager of the Western Newspaper Union at Kansas City; H. H. Phillipot has not left The Bee, but has become its correspondent at Lincoln; J. M. Prager, who shouldered arms in Cuba and learned about the Chinese in his native lair, has gone no one knows where; John Beckan Ryan, one of the best known and popular commercial reporters who ever worked in Omaha, has gone to Cincinnati on the staff of the Commercial-Tribune; Dana Steeth, a gentleman of exceedingly deliberate movement, is now running a paper at some little town on the northwest coast; Albert Watkins, Jr., the Beau Brummel of the profession while here, is getting out a farm paper at Lincoln. The present attention that Frank Wickizer is giving to poultry has been mentioned. He has, however, been forgetting the chicken coops long enough to contribute an occasional story to the magazines. "Artie" Welshans, the thinnest member of the club, from last reports was enjoying the time of his life as dramatic critic for a Los Angeles paper, and Lou A. Crowell, another early member of the club, is trying down his youth as rapidly as possible by hard newspaper work there.

Doesn't Stay the Club.
But the club keeps on. With wheel-horses like the present officers Medlar and others, it could not pass away under any circumstances, and with the new blood constantly coming in and a comfortable bank balance, the outlook for the future is bright.

The following have been elected honorary members of the Omaha Press club: Dr. George L. Miller, Edward Rosewater, Mal Vhl, T. W. McCullough, W. R. Watson, Benjamin J. Herbert, M. G. Perkins, G. M. Hiltchcock, R. L. Metcalfe, Herbert L. Fowler, Victor Rosewater, Frank Wickizer, J. Laurie Wallace.